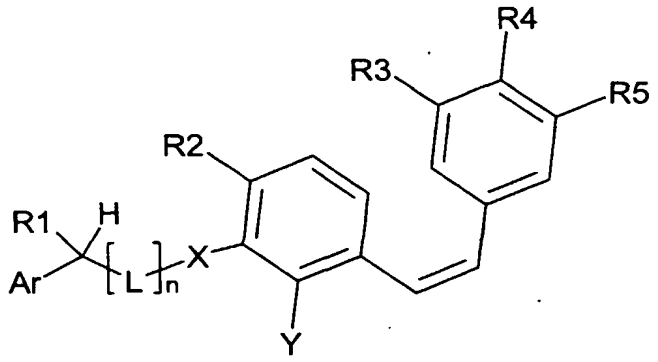
CLAIMS

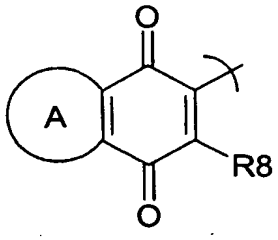
1. A compound of formula (1), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



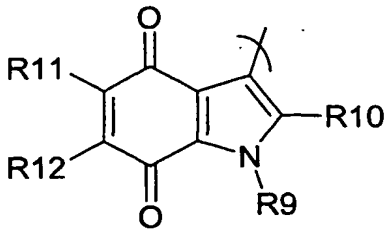
(1)

wherein:

- Ar is a substituted heteroaryl group bearing at least one nitro or azido group or is a group of formula (2) or (3);



(2)



(3)

- R_1 is hydrogen, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl or optionally substituted heteroaryl;
- R_2 is alkyl, alkoxy, thioalkoxy or halo;
- R_3, R_4 and R_5 are each independently alkyl, alkoxy, thioalkoxy or halo with the proviso that at least two of R_3, R_4 or R_5 are alkoxy;
- L is -OC(O)- or -OP(O)(OR_6)-;
- n is 0 or 1;

- X is O, S or NR_7;
- Y is hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy, thioalkoxy, halo, hydroxy or dihydrogenphosphate;
- R_6 is H or alkyl;
- R_7 is H or alkyl;
- R_8 is hydrogen, alkoxy or dialkylaminoalkyl;
- R_9 is optionally substituted alkyl;
- R_{10} is hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy or dialkylaminoalkyl;
- R_{11} and R_{12} are independently hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy, thioalkoxy, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, morpholino, alkylmorpholino, piperidino, alkylpiperidino, piperazino, alkylpiperazino or 1-aziridinyl; and
- A, together with the carbon atoms to which it is fused, is an optionally substituted aryl or heteroaryl ring.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein the alkyl groups in the R_{1-7} and R_{9-12} substituents are unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 unsubstituted substituents chosen from halogen, amino, mono(C_1-C_4 alkyl)amino, di(C_1-C_4 alkyl)amino, hydroxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxy and C_1-C_4 alkylthio substituents.

3. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the aryl and heteroaryl groups in the Ar, A and R_1 substituents are unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 unsubstituted substituents selected from halogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy, amino, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy and C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy.

4. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein R_1 is hydrogen, unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkyl, a phenyl group which is unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 unsubstituted substituents selected from halogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy, amino, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy and C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy or a heteroaryl group which is unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 unsubstituted substituents selected from halogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy, amino, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy and C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy substituents.

5. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein R_1 is hydrogen or unsubstituted C_1-C_2 alkyl.

6. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein R_2 is unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkyl, unsubstituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, unsubstituted thio(C_1-C_4 alkoxy) or a halo group.

7. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein R_2 is an unsubstituted C_1-C_2 alkoxy group.

8. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein R_3, R_4 and R_5 are the same or different and each represent unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkyl, unsubstituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, unsubstituted thio(C_1-C_4 alkoxy) or a halo group provided that at least two of R_3, R_4 and R_5 are alkoxy.

9. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein R_3, R_4 and R_5 are the same or different and each represent unsubstituted C_1-C_2 alkoxy.

10. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein X is O, S or NR_7, wherein R_7 is hydrogen or unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkyl.

11. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein X is O, S or NH.

12. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein L is -OC(O)- or -OP(O)(OR_6)-, wherein R_6 is hydrogen or unsubstituted C_1-$_6$ alkyl.

13. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein L is -OC(O)-.

14. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein n is 0.

15. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein Y is selected from hydrogen, unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkyl, unsubstituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy, unsubstituted thio(C_1-C_4 alkoxy), halo, hydroxy and dihydrogenphosphate substituents.

16. A compound according to any one of the previous claims wherein Y is hydrogen.

17. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein Ar is a substituted aryl or 5 to 10 membered heteroaryl group which carries one substituent selected from a nitro or azido group and 0, 1 or 2 further unsubstituted substituents chosen from halogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy, amino, C_1-C_4 haloalkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy and C_1-C_4 haloalkoxy substituents.

18. A compound according to any one of the previous claims, wherein Ar is an unsubstituted nitrophenyl, unsubstituted nitroimidazole, unsubstituted nitrothiophene or unsubstituted nitrofuranyl group.

19. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 16, wherein Ar is a group of formula (3), wherein R_9 is an unsubstituted C_1-C_6 alkyl group.

20. A compound according to any one of claims 19, wherein R_9 is an unsubstituted C_1-C_2 alkyl group.

21. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 16 and 19 to 20, wherein R_{10} is selected from hydrogen, unsubstituted C_1- C_6 alkyl, unsubstituted C_1-C_4 alkoxy and unsubstituted di(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino(C_1-C_6 alkyl) substituents.

22. A compound according to claim 21, wherein R_{10} is an unsubstituted C_1-C_2 alkyl group.

23. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 16 and 19 to 22, wherein

R_{11} and R_{12} are the same or different and each represent an unsubstituted substituent selected from hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, thio(C_1-C_4 alkoxy), amino, (C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino, di(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino, morpholino, (C_1-C_6 alkyl)morpholino, piperidino, (C_1-C_6 alkyl)piperidino, piperazino, (C_1-C_6 alkyl)piperazino and 1-aziridinyl substituents.

24. A compound according to claim 23, wherein R_{11} and R_{12} are the same or different and each represent a substituent selected from hydrogen, unsubstituted C_1-C_2 alkoxy and unsubstituted (C_1-C_2 alkyl)piperidino substituents.

25. A compound according to any one of the previous claims which is 1-(4-methoxy-3-(5-nitrothien-2-yl)methoxy)phenyl-2-(3,4,5-trimethoxy)phenyl-*Z*-ethene, 1-(4-Methoxy-3-(1-(5-nitrothien-2-yl)ethoxy))phenyl-2-(3,4,5-trimethoxy)phenyl-*Z*-ethene, 1-(4-Methoxy-3-(5-nitrothien-2-yl)methoxycarbonyloxy)phenyl-2-(3,4,5-trimethoxy)phenyl-*Z*-ethene, 5-Methoxy-3-((3,4,4',5-tetramethoxy-(Z)-stilbene-3'-yl)oxy)methyl-1,2-dimethylindole-4,7-dione or 3-((3,4,4',5-Tetramethoxy-(Z)-stilbene-3'-yl)oxy)methyl-1,2-dimethyl-5-(4-methylpiperazin-1-yl)indole-4,7-dione, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

26. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of the previous claims, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

27. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 25, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, for use in the treatment of the human or animal body.

28. Use of a compound as defined according to any one of claims 1 to 25, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament for the prevention or treatment of a proliferative disorder.

29. Use according to claim 28, wherein the proliferative disorder is cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic lesions, diabetic retinopathy or wet age-related macular degeneration.

30. Use according to claim 28 or 29, wherein the proliferative disorder is a hypoxic disorder.

31. Use according to any one of claims 28 to 30, wherein the medicament is for use in the prevention or treatment of a solid tumour or leukaemia.

32. A method of ameliorating or reducing the incidence of a proliferative disorder as defined according to any one of claims 28 to 31 in a patient, which method comprises administering to said patient an effective amount of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 25, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

33. A method according to claim 32, which method comprises administering to said patient an effective amount of:

(a) a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 25, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and

(b) a reductase, an anti-body reductase conjugate, a macromolecule-reductase conjugate or DNA encoding a reductase gene.

34. A product containing:

(a) a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 25, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and

(b) a reductase, an anti-body reductase conjugate, a macromolecule-reductase conjugate or DNA encoding a reductase gene

for the simulataneous, separate or sequential use in the treatment of a proliferative disorder as defined in any one of claims 28 to 31.